

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1517

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 20746

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PDEV, UK, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: CARVER BRIEFING OF FOURIE

1. EMBASSY OFFICER ATTENDED LORD CARVER'S BRIEFING OF FOURIE AFTERNOON OF DECEMBER 21. CARVER GAVE A FULL EXPOSITION OF HIS PLANS FOR MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS DURING THE TRANSITION IN RHODESIA. WHILE THOROUGH, CARVER AVOIDED DETAILS AND CONSTANTLY STRESSED THAT HIS IDEAS HAD NOT BEEN NEGOTIATED WITH THE RHODESIANS NOR EVEN DISCUSSED WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT.

2. CARVER FIRST OUTLINED THE PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD GOVERN THE CREATION OF A ZIMBABWE NATIONAL ARMY DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD. HE SAID THAT HE HAD PROCEEDED ON THE ASSUMPTION THERE WOULD BE A SETTLEMENT AGREED BY THE PARTIES AND AN EFFECTIVE CEASE-FIRE. GIVEN THIS, HE SAID, THE PROBLEM IS NOT SO MUCH THE QUESTION
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OF LAW AND ORDER BECAUSE THE POLICE WILL BE AVAILABLE TO HIM, BUT RATHER WHAT TO DO WITH THOUSANDS OF ARMED MEN. HE THEN OUTLINED, AS HE HAD TO THE RHODESIANS IN NOVEMBER, THE CONCEPT OF A NEW ARMY BASED ON THE LIBERATION FORCE, CONTAINING ACCEPTABLE ELEMENTS OF THE RDF AND OPEN TO ALL CITIZENS. HE DESCRIBED THE POSSIBLE CREATION OF A REGULAR ARMY WITH THREE RAR

BATTALIONS, AT LEAST (A PHRASE HE EMPHASIZED SEVERAL TIMES) FOUR BATTALIONS FROM THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND NEW RECRUITS, AND SUPPORT UNITS WITH A HIGH LEVEL OF AFRICANIZATION. HE NEXT DESCRIBED THE REGULAR RESERVE AND THE CREATION OF THE ZIMBABWE NATIONAL GUARD. IN THE COURSE OF THIS EXPLANATION CARVER ALSO COMMENTED ON THE POSITIONS AS WE KNOW THEM OF THE RHODESIANS AND OF MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE. FURTHER, CARVER DESCRIBED THE SELECTION PROCESS, USING FORWARD BASES AS POINTS OF CONCENTRATION, AND THE DIFFICULTIES OF MERGING THE DIFFERENT UNITS INTO A SINGLE FORCE.

3. WHILE ALL OF THIS IS FAMILIAR TO ADDRESSEES, MOST OF IT APPARENTLY CAME AS NEWS TO FOURIE. HE TOOK COPIOUS NOTES, WENT OVER THE NUMBERS SEVERAL TIMES, AND WROTE DOWN THE NAMES OF THE RDF UNITS TO BE DISBANDED. THERE WAS VERY LITTLE DISCUSSION.

4. AT THE CLOSE CARVER AGAIN POINTED OUT THAT HIS IDEAS WERE ONLY A FRAMEWORK AND MUCH REMAINS TO BE DISCUSSED WITH BOTH SIDES. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT HE HOPED THAT FOURIE RECOGNIZED THAT THE PLAN DID NOT ENVISAGE THE DISMANTLEMENT OF THE RHODESIAN FORCES.

5. FOURIE SAID THE INFORMATION WAS ESPECIALLY CONFIDENTIAL

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VALUABLE IF SOUTH AFRICA IS TO INFLUENCE THE RHODESIANS. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS RELUCTANT TO LEAD THE RHODESIANS DOWN ANOTHER PATH AND COMMENTED UNHAPPILY THAT THE CHANGE IN FORMULA FOR THE MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS LAST AUGUST HAD ALREADY CAUSED THEM SOME EMBARRASSMENT. HE CONCLUDED, HOWEVER, THAT CARVER'S DESCRIPTION "MERITS LOOKING INTO MORE CAREFULLY." ANSWERS ARE STILL NEEDED FROM THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, BUT THE PROPOSALS CANNOT BE REJECTED OUT OF HAND. FOURIE REMARKED SOMEWHAT QUIZZICALLY THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAD RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION FROM SMITH THAT CARVER'S PROPOSALS WERE COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE.

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